



TITLE:

# ETHICAL BASE OF J. HABERMAS' CRITICAL SOCIALTHEORY

AUTHOR(S):

Hirai, Toshihiko

---

CITATION:

Hirai, Toshihiko. ETHICAL BASE OF J. HABERMAS' CRITICAL  
SOCIALTHEORY. Kyoto University Economic Review 1987, 57(1): 1-14

ISSUE DATE:

1987-04

URL:

<https://doi.org/10.11179/ker1926.57.1>

RIGHT:

# THE KYOTO UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC REVIEW

MEMOIRS OF THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS  
KYOTO UNIVERSITY

---

VOL. LVII, NO. 1

APRIL 1987

WHOLE NO. 122

---

## CONTENTS

**Ethical Base of J. Habermas' Critical Socialtheory**

*Toshihiko HIRAI* 1

**A Multi-Sectoral Econometric-Model Divided by Social  
Strata of the Japanese Economy**

*Masanori NOZAWA*  
*Hiroshi OHNISHI* 15

**The Cost of Marriages and Marriage-Related Saving in Japan**

*Charles Yuji HORIOKA* 47

---

PUBLISHED BY

THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, KYOTO UNIVERSITY  
SAKYO-KU, KYOTO, JAPAN

THE  
KYOTO UNIVERSITY  
**ECONOMIC REVIEW**

MEMOIRS OF THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS  
KYOTO UNIVERSITY

---

VOLUME LVII NUMBER 1 (APRIL 1987) WHOLE NUMBER 122

---

**ETHICAL BASE OF J. HABERMAS'  
CRITICAL SOCIALTHEORY**

*By* Toshihiko HIRAI\*

J. Habermas identified his academic position as the critical social theory (die kritische Gesellschaftstheorie) in his recent masterpiece, "The Theory of Communicative Action, 1981" (Die Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, 1981) and presented its theoretical task in the conclusion of final consideration of the book.<sup>1)</sup> This book can be regarded as evidence why his theory is the critical theory of society. Such position may be characterized as succession to the consciousness of issues of the critical theory (Kritische Theorie) by early Horkheimer and Adorno on the one hand, and it may be a declaration of theoretical independence from the first generation of Frankfurt school represented by them, especially the late "Dialectic of Enlightenment."

Habermas produced many works since his early major writing, "Structural Change of Publicity — Research of a Category of Civil Society, 1962" (Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit, — Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, 1962.) The translations of his major works have been published also in Japan. The scope of subjects which his works treat, covers many academic fields such as philosophy, sociology, politics, jurisprudence, economics, anthropology and linguistics. Needless to say, I cannot discuss about individual fields of his speciality, especially linguistics and, of course, won't provide comprehensive appreciation for his works in this paper, nor have intention to trace development of his thought as found in recent studies. On

---

\* Professor, Faculty of Economics, Kyoto University.

1) Jürgen Habermas, *Die Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, Ffm, 1981.

the occasion of having translated a part of the above-mentioned book into Japanese, I would like to show straight forward what sense of methodology the critical social theory has arisen under the support of, and what base of thought it is supported by, and what construction the system of his theory has after all.

### I Third Reflection of Reason

In summer, 1981 when "The theory of Communicative Action" was published, A. Honneth, E. Knäddler=Bunte and A. Widman had a talk with Habermas under the theme of "Dialectic of rationalization" (Dialektik der Rationalisierung). In this talk, Habermas mentioned four motives for writing the abovementioned book. Among these motives, it is the third motive, "Dialectic of social rationalization" (Dialektik der gesellschaftlichen Rationalisierung), that plainly shows his sense of the issues.

"This motive was already a major theme of the dialectic of enlightenment (Dialektik der Aufklärung)". Said Habermas, "What I wanted to express here is that the theory of modern ages—a theory to give the choices necessary for analyzing sociopathological phenomena or something grasped as materializing within the Marxist tradition—can be developed only in the concept of communication theory". Maintaining that this very communication concept is a related concept to mediate between the theory of society and the theory of action, in addition, he said, "I showed development of a concept of society to connect between the theory of system and the theory of action—may be this is the fourth motive—for this purpose. Since the theory of society developed in the category of totality is resolved into various elements of the theory, that is, the theory of action on the one hand and the theory of system on the other hand, a task of the modern theory of society is now—to integrate these two paradigms. Since the criticism of instrumental reason (Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft) can no more be continued with the old critical theory, more suitable form of criticism of functionalistic reason can be shown as stated above."<sup>2)</sup>

Today it is well known that Adorno charged, in "Dialectic of Enlightenment" written by him jointly with Horkheimer, that the reason of enlightenment generating modern ages had been rather reversed to mythology and transformed into irrationalism. Although it was true that "programs of enlightenment were to liberate the world from spells and intention of enlightenment was to dissolve mythology and to degenerate authority of phantasy by knowledge",<sup>3)</sup> the reason of enlightenment has generated materiality and believed in quantitative countability of things, and it has oppositely made such features penetrate into the human world. This is the logic of reification by Adorno. I once pointed out in my paper "Lukács and Adorno—concerning Modern Dialectic" (1978) that Adorno succeeded to the reification theory by Lukács.<sup>4)</sup> "Numbers became the standard of enlightenment. The same formula rules both

2) J. Habermas, *Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit*, Ffm. 1985, p. 180.

3) M. Horkheimer u. T.W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung, Philosophische Fragmente*, Ffm. 1969, p. 8.

4) *Method and History of Social Sciences*, Minerva Shobo, 1978, p. 184–202.

civilian justice and commodity exchange.—The civil society is ruled by the equivalent exchange principle. The civil society makes elements unreducible to a common denominator be comparable by reducing them to some abstract quantity. From the viewpoint of enlightenment, what has not resolved in a number or unity in the end would be regarded as semblance".<sup>5)</sup>

It is Habermas that positioned such paradox of enlightenment by Adorno along development of dialectic of the critical reason and determined his own situation against Adorno. Habermas considered in his paper, "Duality of Mythology and Enlightenment", that a focus of the critical theory was the critical character and reflectional character held by the reason of enlightenment. In this sense, it can be said that Habermas obviously returned to the critical philosophy of Kant and the reflectivity in Hegel's dialectic. Of course, Habermas himself rejected classical Philosophy, especially the transcendental philosophy of Kant and the teleological philosophy of consciousness of Hegel as metaphysics. Therefore, he decisively rejected the teleological theory of class consciousness of the Hegel style resting with the base of Lukács "History and Class Consciousness". However, Habermas found in his discussion the relation between human autonomy (dignity of individuals) and social solidarity of individuals, and obviously relied on the modern ethical and historical view of the German classical philosophy when he maintained that this process is simultaneously self-reflection and learning process. For Habermas, therefore, dialectic is dynamism of self-denial and self-realization. Of course, the subject of Habermas is neither the world spirit of Hegel nor laboring proletariat of Marx. However, he is quite irrelative to the thought of preestablished harmony tinged by eighteen-century-like optimism.

Following Durkheim, Habermas also maintained that there are two sides of human character, that is, an element of social solidarity that human beings want to belong to group and another element of differentiation which will segregate individuality from groups. Transformation of mythology into enlightenment is just a step where an individual intends to be independent and builds himself or, so to speak, the first step of self-reflection of human reason. That is segregation of human beings from nature and the step of reification of objects or liberation from magic. Essentially, there should have happened to occur historical evolution caused by rationalization. However, doesn't such materialization be just transformed into teleologically rational technocracy, as far as the enlightenment led by satisfaction of self-desire is confronted with control of the nature? Adorno and Horkheimer made negative self-reflection against such reason of enlightenment as follows: "While the process of enlightenment arises by the motive of self-preservation from the very onset, this motive of self-preservation itself causes damage to the reason, because this motive intends to employ the reason only in the form of teleologically rational control of the nature and impulsive control by instinct as the instrumental reason".<sup>6)</sup> They also made this instrumental reason penetrate not

5) M. Horkheimer u. T.W. Adorno, *ibid.*, p. 13-4.

6) J. Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Ffm. 1985, p. 135.

only into science but also moral and art and maintained that various moments of reason found in respective field, had retrograded into rationality which serves self-preservation becoming wild.

Seeing like this, Adorno's criticism against the instrumental reason should overlap the way from Hegel to Nietzsche. Habermas calls this criticism on enlightenment the second self-reflection of reason which follows the first step of criticism on mythology by reason. Of course, they did not extract "the will toward power" from criticism on the modern reason, as Nietzsche did. Saying in the style of Habermas, the critical reason maintained by them is nothing but reason which is captured by the social system and has lost its critical character. Had the critical reason really retrograded wholly into the instrumental reason under the social system as Adorno and his followers maintained? As far as it is a critical theory, the reason has a task to make self-reflection again on such degenerated reason. In this regard, Habermas clearly returns, through the rationalization theory of Max Weber, to the standpoint of the critical philosophy of Kant rather than Nietzsche. In other words, enlightenment has never dissolved completely by mythology. Saying like this, we should read his methodological consciousness as the "phenomenology of mind" in which young Hegel once approved the historical inevitability of enlightenment with opposition to irrationalism of Schelling and Jacobi and struggled to incorporate the inevitability into his own system. If so, the base of Habermas' thought is not only on Weber's theory as generally said but also on Kant's critical philosophy and Hegel's social philosophy beyond Weber. Of course, there may be some differences in character between Kant and Hegel, but it can be considered that Habermas has been attracted by the modern rationalism which German classical philosophy universally have.

## II Regeneration of Modern Age

### —Possibility to Criticize Validity Claims—

While enlightenment has surely raised productive power for self-preservation of mankind through the process of rationally overcoming nature for Adorno, it has instead paralyzed ability of reconciliation with nature beyond mere self-preservation. If so, has the critical reason ever found perished? This step is clearly nothing but a process to transform rationality into materiality. Habermas protested against the reason transformed into the instrumental reason and added, so the speak, the "third self-reflection" to the critical reason. The way to restore critical character of the reason for Habermas is basically to regenerate potentiality of such reason through argument and it is nothing but process for human beings to intend to understand mutually through discussion. Only by this discussion, citizens can acquire power opposable to authority of the social system by concentrating their own volition. To tell the truth, Habermas entrusted the principle of modern democracy resisting totalitarianism to communicative action. Originally, the modern enlightenment should have held criticism of such reason. Through this process, human beings can become autonomous as modern individuals

and also be incorporated as socially independent personality.

Isn't Adorno's failure to regenerate reason in his writing "Dialectic of Enlightenment" caused by the fact that he has unified various functions of reason into the cognitive and instrumental reason? Against this fact, Habermas introduced, in his above-mentioned writing, "differentiation of value fields" in the modern society after Max Weber. Although it is a little longer, I will here under mention the quotation as follows: "The original dignity of cultural models rests in what Max Weber called 'the highly autonomous differentiation in the sphere of value' (die eigensinnige Ausdifferenzierung der Wertspähren). Far from being paralyzed, power to negate or competence to distinguish between "yes" and "no" becomes raised along with the above. This is because it became possible to deal with matters relating to truth, justice and taste according to their own original logic and to develop them. Surely, it can be said that tendency to drag all issues relating to validity into a narrow horizon of teleological rationality that was held by subjects devoting oneself to self-preservation or social systems only intending continuance of existence becomes deepen through capitalist economy and modern countries. However, it is coercive power to advance differentiation of reason that is opposed to and competing with such tendency of just social degradation of reason. Such coercive power has been induced by rationalization of the view of world and the life world, and therefor it should not be despised. Thus, the reason has taken a procedural character in this process. Requirement of validity is naturalistically assimilated to requirement of power and disintegration of critical ability is progressing on the one hand, and culture of various specialists has been formulated in competing with the above on the other hand. In this culture of specialists, three kinds of validity expressed in respective constituents give proper intention of autonomy to various demands for propositional truth, normative rightness and confirmatory character for beauty."<sup>7)</sup>

Returning to Kant's critical philosophy also in this paper, Habermas divides the sphere of human action and assertion into theory, practice and judgment. This may be a variation of method which Lukács elucidated antinomy of classic philosophy in chapter 2 of "Reification and Consciousness of Proletariat." Such division of human workings into three sphere is the products of modern ages and "rationality" should be pursued in respective sphere. Thus, Habermas has thoroughly extended the concept of rationality not only to the teleological rationality, but also to sphere of moral and art. This very dissolution is a feature of modernization. In this case, the three sphere can be never ranked by the value standard and they are equally elements constituting modern civil society. Such differentiation is objective. Habermas formerly clarified differentiation and mutual relation among each sphere of economy, politics and culture in "Problems of Legitimacy in Late Capitalism" (1973). Since problems of the social system in the organized modern capitalism themselves are major points to be considered, I'd like to deal with them on another occasion. Already in this stage,

---

7) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 137.

Habermas discriminated requirement of validity of respective action and speech in sphere of economy, politics, etc. and named the former for propositional truth and the latter for legitimacy of norm.<sup>8)</sup>

Habermas maintained as follows in his paper "Some Characteristics of the Mythical and the Modern Ways of Understanding the World." "In mythical thought, various validity claims such as propositional truth, normative rightness and expressive sincerity are not yet completely divided. But even the diffuse concept of validity in general is still not freed from empirical admixtures. Concepts of validity such as morality and truth are amalgamated with empirical ordering concepts, such as causality and health. Thus a linguistically constituted worldview can not identified with the worldorder itself to such an extent that it can not be perceived as an interpretation of the world that is subject to error and open to criticism. In this respect the confusion of nature and culture takes on the significance of a reification of worldview."<sup>9)</sup>

In this case, "various validity claims", for example, relate to rationality to take appropriate measures according to purposes or effectiveness of propositional truth or teleological action as for science and technology or teleologically rational works, and mean validity of "action to be regulated normally" which acts according to existing norm within the sphere of moral or law as for normative rightness, and further imply rationality of the sincerity how to express own experiences within the sphere of art, literature or drama as for sincerity in self-presentation. Upon recognizing that every human action as it should be in these respective life spheres differs, Habermas considered that there is human relation where every such action requires recognition or agreement by others with declaration of respective validity claim. This is his "life world" and social integration against the social system. The core concept of the above is not the passive reason from the external by the social system but "communicative practice" to intend understanding based on criticizable validity claims.

"To sum up, we can say that actions regulated by norms, expressive self-presentation, and also evaluative expression, supplement constative speech acts in constituting a communicative practice which, against the background of a lifeworld, is oriented to achieving, sustaining, and renewing consensus—and indeed a consensus that rests on the intersubjective recognition of criticizable validity claims. The rationality inherent in this practice is seen in the fact a communicatively achieved agreement must be based in the end on reasons. And the rationality of those who participate in this communicative practice is determined by whether, if necessary, they could, under suitable circumstances, provide reasons for their expressions. Thus the rationality proper to the communicative practice of everyday life points to the practice of argumentation as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other means when disagreements can no longer be repaired with everyday routines and yet are not to be settled by the direct or strategic use of force. For this reason I believe that the

8) J. Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus*, Ffm. 1973, p. 21.

9) J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, translated by Th. McCarthy, Boston, 1983, p. 50.



concept of communicative rationality, which refers to an clarified systematic inter-connection of universal validity claims, can be adequately explicated only in terms of a theory of argumentation."<sup>10)</sup>

Habermas stated that this argumentation is "that type of speech in which participants the matize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them through arguments." Although he develops concrete contents of this manner of dialogue, I have no room to examine linguistic meaning of his work. However, I will clarify that this demand of validity is criticizable as far as it is a rational speech and that argument is connected with the learning process. He maintained as follows: "We can correct failed attempts if we can successfully identify our mistakes. The concept of grounding is interwoven with that of learning. Augumentation plays an important role in learning processes as well."<sup>11)</sup> If these comments are appropriate, there should be theoretical discussion to consider propositional truth, moral and practical discussion to examine legitimacy for norm and aesthetic discussion in respective spheres, and it is possible to "creatively regenerate negative experiences" through reflectional media of discussion.

By the way, what is very characteristic of Habermas is to connect such validity or differentiation of value spheres (differentiation of modern ages) with learning process and to find this process in the theory of individual formation by Piaget and to grasp it as internal evolution from child to adults. Connecting with development of worldview, this evolution leads to the theory of social evolution. In this sense, it can be considered that his theory is clearly based on the conscious development of mind with mediation of the negative experience in Hegel's "Phenomenology of Mind" with modification of conscious subjects. This is the reason why he asserts the universality of Western rationalism. Quoting Piaget, Habermas maintained as follows:

"The growing child works out for himself, equiprimordially, the concept of the external and internal worlds in dealing practically with objects and with himself. Piaget also draws a distinction between dealing with physical objects and dealing with social objects, that is, reciprocal action between a subject and objects and reciprocal action between a subject and other subjects. Correspondingly the external universe is differentiated into the world of perceptible and manipulable objects on the one hand and the world of normatively regulated interpersonal relations on the other. The learning mechanisms of assimilation and accommodation operate through both of these types of action in a specific way."<sup>12)</sup> Therefore, Habermas' regeneration of reason of enlightenment is clearly connected with the theory of social evolution of mankind as historical consciousness of enlightenment.

10) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, pp. 17-8.

11) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 18.

12) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, pp. 68-9.

### III Concept of Communicative Action

I have proved in the preceding chapter that Habermas captured critical reason in relation with the validity claims in the three spheres of propositional truth, rightness regulated by norm and self-presentational sincerity. In this case, respective validity has rationality because it can be grounded and criticized. This is a special feature of modern ages and the base to form the modern society. As Habermas has assumed, it is in the differentiated world that speaking and acting subjects assert respective validity claim. Thus, the world is divided into three kinds of world, that is, objective world, social world and subjective world. In the sphere of science and technology, for example, subjects who cognize objects involving the natural world, maintain how true the proposition is and how adaptable and effective means to be taken for certain purpose are. In the sphere of moral or law, the world corresponding to subjects would not be the objective world but be the social world in the meaning that subjects act according to norm recognized as social order also by others and ask its validity. Between these two categories, there is a distinct difference. This is also appropriate to the sphere of art or literature. The actor's assertion of validity of sincerity to express himself asks how frankly his performance or works express his experiences. In the aesthetic sphere, it can be said that subjects correspond to the subjective world.

At any rate, Habermas analyzed what world the action in respective spheres relates to with mediation of three kinds of validity claim. In the first place, the demanded validity of propositional truth is communication to be attained also in the social system but not communicative action, even if it is grounded by a speaker and is criticizable from a receiver. These two categories are clearly discriminated and show division of communication concept between the social system and the life world. In case of teleologically rational action, an isolated individual confronts an object. There may be some cases where at least two subjects simultaneously make teleological action, affecting accounts or determination by others. Habermas called it "strategic action" and, in any case, it is action to measure truth or effectiveness on his own interest.

"The teleological model of action takes language as one of several media through which speakers oriented to their own success can influence one another in order to bring opponents to form or to grasp beliefs and intentions that are in the speaker's own interest."<sup>13)</sup> If so, this reason is nothing but the above-mentioned instrumental reason for self-preservation, however rational it may be.

In the sphere of moral or law and the sphere of art, the model of such instrumental reason is not always available. Even in these cases, "Each of actors pursues a certain purpose by mutually understanding and regulating own action. In such extent, teleological constitution is basic for every concept of action". However, the action regulated by norm, which is different from teleologically rational action, is interaction relating to not only existing objective world but also social world. "There is the social world to which the actor belongs as a role-playing subject, as do additional actors who can take

13) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 95.

up normatively regulated interactions among themselves. A social world consists of a normative context that lays down which interactions belong to the totality of legitimate interpersonal relations."<sup>14</sup> In case of dramaturgical, besides, the relation of mutual agreement is produced between the public and performer. Therefore, such action is not "strategic action model" to intend direct effects but "social action to connect actor's own action with other's action.

Seeing like this, Habermas seems to discriminate the teleologically rational action or strategic action from the norm-regulated action or dramaturgical action. Of course, such strategic action relates to not only teleologically rational action but also other two kinds of action. Since the former surely has cognitive and instrumental rationality and connects with concept to be a base of the system theory, Habermas requiring regeneration of the critical reason will give negative appreciation to the teleological action. As stated above, roles played by the cognitive and instrumental reason for negating reification (magic performing) of the mythological world view and establishing the modern world view, should not be disregarded. As Adorno described, however, penetration of this reason throughout the whole social life will again lead to new reification. Therefore, "Dialectic of Enlightenment" charged that this modern reason has been transformed into the instrumental reason and reversed to mythology. Habermas contrastingly intended to regenerate, among reason of enlightenment, new critical reason enabling mutual criticism between personality and another personality. This is the validity claim in the life world and the reason to guide formation of agreement through discussion on the claim. It is for that purpose that we propose "theory of argumentation" in the opening chapter.

Indeed, in this meaning, the normatively regulated action and the dramaturgical action are social actions in which we can interact. But, in Chapter 3, Habermas characterizes three concepts of actions in relation with respective world and judges them as incomplete under linguistic action, and then proposes the communicative action as the 4th model of action. This communicative action model is the key concept to criticize communication of the social system by the life world and I think that Chapter 3 introducing this concept is important for his social theory. Habermas maintained that each of the linguistic concept in existing three action models is one-sided and criticized as follows: "The one-sidedness of the first three concepts of language can be seen in the fact that the corresponding types of communication singled out by them prove to be limit cases of communicative action: first, the indirect communication of those who have only the realization of their own ends in view; second, the consensual action of those who simply actualize an already existing normative agreement; and third, presentation of self in relation to an audience."<sup>15</sup> If so, is the interaction an agreement only to testify rightness of own according to existing norm even in case of norm-regulated action? Isn't it an agreement for forming political will which is captur-

14) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 88.

15) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 95.

ed by existing order? Critical examination must extend to the rightness of existing norm itself.

Thus, Habermas called the field to integrate three kinds of formal world concepts, that is, the action model where persons participating in the interaction can reach understanding through free and critical discussion, for the "communicative action model." He explained this reflectional world-relation as follows: "Speakers integrate the three formal world-concepts, which appear in the other models of action either singly or in pairs, into a system and presuppose this system in common as a framework of interpretation within which they can reach an understanding. They no longer relate straightaway to something in the objective, social, or subjective worlds, instead they relativize their utterances against the possibility that their validity will be contested by other actors. Reaching an understanding functions as a mechanism for coordinating actions only through the participants in interaction to an agreement concerning the claimed validity of their utterances, that is, through intersubjectively recognizing the validity claims they reciprocally raise."<sup>16)</sup>

If so, it can be said that this concept of communicative action is not the fourth concept in parallel with other three spheres but the reflectional concept of action to criticize these three kinds of action concepts, that they fall into one-sidedness and fixedness and are going to be eroded by the social system. In addition, this reflectional concept of action characterizes the modernization theory of Habermas. In other words, modernization is to differentiate thoroughly life spheres on the one hand and produces bases to integrate them on other hand. This just means dialectic of differentiation and integration. The action theory of Habermas is completely based on the concrete spheres of the modern social life in that sense and plays the role of drawing out critical latent power in these three kinds of action. He said, "With the model of communicative action we are supposing that participants in interaction can now mobilize the rationality potential—which according to our previous analysis resides in the actor's three relations to the world—expressly for the cooperatively pursued goal of reaching understanding."<sup>17)</sup> By the way, only that such reflectional functions criticize three kinds of world concepts positioned within one social system with understanding, comes to grasp communicative action too abstractly. Habermas explained the basic concept of this action in the life world, and described that human beings will, without any external compelling force, mutually declare respective validity claim, mutually criticize without authority nor privileged status, approve mutually and subjectively and reach understanding. In this case, he pursued this in the "theory of argumentation" and conceived this to be mutual understanding through argument and discussion. What on earth does he grasp this field of discussion?

While actors will directly participate in discussion when they make interaction, Habermas described, "With a formal world-concept an actor becomes involved in

16) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

17) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 99.

suppositions of commonality that, from his perspective, point beyond the circle of those immediately involved and claim to be valid for outside interpreters as well."<sup>18)</sup> It is important that, so to speak, the third persons to observe and interpret are introduced, or that social scientists play roles in communicative action because observers can descriptively confirm "Whether an action accords with a given norm and whether or not the norm in turn enjoys social currency."<sup>19)</sup> If so, it should be expected to discuss deeper than the level to criticize whether actors of interaction conform to a certain norm. Further, this role of interpreters applies to the dramaturgical action. Habermas said, "An interpreter can interpret an action rationally in such a way that he thereby captures elements of deception or self-deception. He can expose the latently strategic character of a self-presentation by comparing the manifest content of the utterance, that is, what the actor says, with what the actor means."<sup>20)</sup> Even in this case, criticism should become possible on the level deeper than superficial relation between actors and public.

In this case, Habermas calls such third parties observers, interpreters, or social scientists as case may be. This may be caused by the fact that he is developing his own view in various spheres of social theory such as science theory, social phenomenology and ethnomethodology. We can collectively call these persons for social scientists who reflectionally observe and interpret this interaction as a category different from persons who directly participate in interaction. Habermas' concept of communicative action can be said to be concept that these two parties cooperate in forming agreement. Certainly, roles of direct participants in communicative action and those of interpreters of the action are quite different. Habermas maintained, "We have to distinguish the interpretive accomplishments of an observer who wants to understand the meaning of a symbolic expression from those of participants in interaction who coordinate their actions through the mechanism of reaching understanding. Unlike those immediately involved, the interpreter is not striving for a interpretation on which there can be a consensus in order to harmonize his own action plans which those of other actors."<sup>21)</sup> According to the communicative action model, internal constructions of mutual understanding of actors appears in the status of interpreters as non-participants.

In this model, however, these two parties with different functions cooperate each other. This has become possible because, so to speak, mutual conversion of status among two parties is made. In other words, two parties are united in to one in the points that they "reach mutual agreement and in this agreement decides yes or no with suitable grounds" and clarifies the rational internal construction of action to intend to understand. Thus, it can be said that the actor becomes the interpreter, and vice versa.

In this case, it is the attitude of an interpreter as a social scientist in the communicative action and also issue of roles to be played by him that Habermas lays stress on.

18) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 102.

19) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 104.

20) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 105.

21) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 106.

Although the manner of his demonstration of communications on this issue is so round about that scope of his own view is very difficult to specify, social scientists also basically are not onlookers of interaction and they are requested to take the performative attitude. Habermas said, "The interpreter himself takes a position on the claim with which purposive-rational actions appear; he relinquishes the attitude of a third person for the performative attitude of a participant who is examining a problematic validity claim and, if need be, criticizing it. Rational interpretations are undertaken in a performative attitude, since the interpreter presupposes a basis for judgement that is shared by all parties, including the actors."<sup>22)</sup> Interpreters become beyond the status of mere interpreters after they have become direct participant, shown critical attitude against validity claim and accepted it or not. Habermas calls subjects of such interpretation for "virtual participants" discriminated from direct participants.

When interpreters participate in communicative action on the performative standpoint as mentioned above, all acting subjects with speech and action ability should take both reflectional and critical attitude. This is because it is possible, as stated already, to clear up the relation of three kinds of world within the framework of one system (system of communicative action) while discriminating three kinds of validity at first. Habermas names this system the common definition of common situation for interaction.<sup>23)</sup> If agreement on such definition of common situation is obtained, the validity claim in three kinds of world could reflectionally be related. This can raise specific understanding in respective spheres to universal understanding. Habermas said as follows in relation with learning process: "The most general structures of communication that speaking and acting subjects have learned to master not only open up access to specific contexts. . . . These same structures also simultaneously provide the critical means to penetrate a given context, to burst it open from within and to transcend it: the means, if need be, to push beyond a de facto established consensus, to revise errors, correct misunderstandings, and the like. The same structures that make it possible to reach an understanding also provide for the possibility of reflection self-control of this process. It is this potential for critique built into communicative action itself that the social scientist, by entering into the contexts of everyday action as a virtual participant, can systematically exploit and bring into play outside these contexts and against their particularity."<sup>24)</sup>

#### IV Formation of Consensus and Discussion Ethics

Habermas intended to establish a communicative action model and to connect the social system theory and the action theory. In the social system, the interaction of human beings is distorted by power or money and discussion without coercion is not formed. Certainly, modern ages have accelerated differentiation of living spheres and

22) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 103.

23) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 117.

24) J. Habermas, *ibid.*, p. 120-1.

liberated human beings from magic of myth. This is obvious progress of modern ages. In this regard, it can be said that Habermas is obviously a son of modern enlightenment and a successor of Weber's historical view. If, however, reason is only incorporated into the economic system or the political system in the organized capitalist society, has reason again degenerated into instrumental reason? Here, Habermas presented the concept of "communicative action" where true agreement would be formed against communications in the social system. This very concept is that to be a standard of the life world.

Habermas discriminated the life world from the social system and, at the same time, intended to mediate them with the communicative action concept. More concretely saying, speaking and acting subjects action in each living sphere realizing modernization or differentiation, presented each other validity claim proper to respective spheres and can reach agreement through mutual criticism by discussion. In this case, human beings to attend interaction are not restricted to direct participant in each sphere and social scientists considering objectively can also participate in the joint understanding process. In this joint work, rational discussion becomes possible for the first time, because failure of teleological rationality or self-deceit of strategic action arising from the social system can be charged. What enables this joint work is the level of life world and a crisis of organized capitalism is nothing but penetration of the logic of social system into the life world. What resists this instrumental and functionalistic reason is nothing but formation of consensus through free discussion in the spontaneous society, isn't it? It may be said that Habermas ventured the principle of modern democracy on formation of such consensus. If so, he should simultaneously overcome horizon of the transcendental theory of life world such as Husserl's theory.

By formation of consensus through free discussion in the spontaneous society, "The Essentials of Democracy" (1929) by A.D. Lindsay may be recollected. Lindsay defined democracy as follows in Chapter 3 of the book, "'Discussion' and 'Senses of Meeting' as Common Thinking." "Democracy is based on the assumption that men can agree on common action which yet leaves each to live his own life-that if we really respect one another's personality we can find a common framework or system of rights within which the free moral life of the individual is possible."<sup>25</sup> At such time, discussion meetings by Protestants in the Puritan Revolution period were the model for Lindsay and there appeared thought of Milton and besides Locke. Of course, Habermas and Lindsay were different on the background of thought. If, however, Habermas maintained meaning of discussion as common thinking when free moral life of individuals were referred to, there would be something related to Lindsay's thought.

What exists on the base of theory of communicative action by Habermas is combination between such ethical view and democratic theory. Through the mediation of formal pragmatics, he proposed "discussion ethics" in the recent lecture, "Moral and Ethic" (1985) and intended to mediate between Kant's ethics of justice (autonomy

25) A.D. Lindsay, *The Essentials of Democracy*, 2nd. ed., London, 1951, p. 33.

and dignity of individuals) and ethics of duty (solidarity) by Karl-Otto Apel's ideal communicative community. Only in the discussion, internal relation was announced where an individual is united with others while being autonomous and he can be united with universal mankind while being a member of a specific community. If so, this discussion ethics can be said to relate Kant's ethics with Hegel's social philosophy. At the beginning of this paper, it is in such meaning that I mentioned that the base of Habermas' critical social theory is German classic philosophy. It should become clear at the same time that this also connected with the concept of citizen's publicity or public opinion proposed in Habermas' early paper, "Structural Conversion of Publicity."

Habermas did not restrict the concept of rationality to mere formal teleological rationality but extended it to every sphere of modern social life, and adopted as an object of discussion validity claim in respective spheres. If so, the concept of rationality was divided into two subclasses, that is, teleological rationality adapting to the social system or rationality of egocentric strategic action and communicative rationality. In this case, there still remains a problem whether mere rationality can fully explain especially the dramaturgical action and another question how they should do when disagreement or collision occurs, may arise. However, it is assumed that disagreement may occur where there is distortion in interaction or something irrational operated and it should soon be overcome by discussion as far as rational subjects are concerned. Therefore, irrationality or disagreement may be opportunity of self-reflection and condition of learning for subjects of interaction. If so, it may be said that the is clearly tinged with historical view of enlightenment, though it is not based on perfect optimism or predetermined harmony.

Seeing like this, a view stated by J.F. Lyotard that the very mutual differentiation through sensitivity is a spring of creation,<sup>26)</sup> has not been formed from its onset, because this means retrogression to the second stage of negative self-reflection of the reason. If rationality vs. irrationality or reason vs. sensitivity is reduced to either element, the dynamism which is held by Hegel's dialectic hasn't been lost?

---

26) J. François Lyotard, *La Condition postmoderne*, 1979.